

FOREWORD BY JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Letters on ⁴⁸²¹ Discipline

by
Humayun Kabir



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION-1956
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

LETTERS ON DISCIPLINE

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by
HUMAYUN KABIR

With a Foreword

by
SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



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P R E F A C E

One of my first concerns when I became Educational Adviser to the Government of India was to attempt an analysis of the causes of indiscipline among students and suggest measures for bringing it under control. I was clear in my mind that such unrest was at least partly due to the vacuum caused by the decay of old and the failure to substitute new values in their place. There is and must always be a certain degree of disequilibrium in any society. In fact, without such disequilibrium there can be no progress. A sharp distinction should however be made between restlessness which is healthy and maladjustment that becomes a menace to society. At least among a section of the youth of India, the restlessness had gone beyond the stage of mere disequilibrium and was tending to become a case of indiscipline and maladjustment.

A memorandum analysing the causes of the unrest and suggesting measures for eradicating the maladjustment and lessening the disequilibrium was circulated among national leaders in the field of education in December 1953. It received fairly wide support and under the instructions of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the memorandum was presented to the Central Advisory Board of Education in January 1954. The Board generally endorsed the suggestions contained in it and specific proposals were put up to the Government for giving effect to these recommendations. The Government accepted the proposals in principle and decided that action should be taken to implement them as quickly and as far as possible.

The Prime Minister, who has throughout been taking a keen interest in the all-round welfare and improvement of the growing generation, wrote a letter to the Chief Ministers of all the States and desired that this should be followed up by further detailed proposals on the various issues raised in his letter. Accordingly, a series of letters was addressed to the State Governments containing concrete and specific suggestions on various matters connected with discipline in schools and colleges.

The present volume contains the letters which have been issued in accordance with this directive of the Prime Minister with his letter as a Foreword to this series. I am deeply grateful to him for his permission to include his letter in the brochure. I hope that publication will make the letters available to a wider public and enable educational authorities at all levels to make greater use of them. It need hardly be

said that the various proposals in these letters are in the nature of suggestions and will naturally have to be modified to suit local conditions.

I have drawn freely upon hints, comments and suggestions from many colleagues in many fields in preparing these letters which deal with one of the most important and difficult problems of education. I am grateful to all of them for the assistance I have received but would like to make special mention of my colleagues in the Ministry, and in particular of Mr. Veda Prakasha, who worked hard to collect much of the material included in the brochure. I would also like to express my appreciation of the magnificent work of Mrs. Muriel Wasi and her associates in carrying out with such marked efficiency and despatch the greatly expanded programme of publications undertaken by the Ministry.

It is perhaps appropriate that the last publication of the Ministry of Education with which I am associated in an official capacity is again one dealing with the problem of unrest and indiscipline amongst students. In a sense, all education is a process of discipline. The individual is a bundle of instincts, emotions, urges and impulses which have to be coordinated and given a central unity in order to achieve an integrated personality. Society is again composed of individuals and social health depends upon a proper adjustment of the rights and claims of the individuals who constitute it. Education is thus the binding principle which alone can give unity and purpose to individuals and communities—and ultimately to the community of all men.

New Delhi,
22nd Feb., 1956.

Humayun Kabir
Educational Adviser to the Government of India.

NEW DELHI,
28th August, 1954.

MY DEAR CHIEF MINISTER,

In my fortnightly letters, I have been sending you an overall survey of the internal and international situation, but today I propose to write to you on a specific subject of great importance to the country. You are aware of the unrest and turbulence which has characterised students' activities in different parts of the country in recent years. Sometimes there have been ugly manifestations of indiscipline as in the clash at Lucknow last year or at Indore only a few weeks ago. Very often the violence of the outburst is out of all proportion to its alleged cause. I have been thinking over this matter and I am convinced that the future of the country demands that early measures must be taken to improve standards of education and discipline among students.

2. The Cabinet has recently considered carefully detailed proposals for improving the standards of education and discipline of students. Some of these proposals have financial implications and the Cabinet was of the view that these should be considered only after we have taken a decision on the report of the Taxation Enquiry Commission. There are however some other measures, mainly non-financial in character, which can be taken in hand immediately and will go a long way in improving the situation. I would therefore request you to consider these measures and take necessary action to see that they are implemented as early as possible.

3. I would, in particular, draw your attention to the following proposals :

(i) Indiscipline among students, the fall in standards and the general deterioration in universities is largely due to the loss of leadership of teachers and the party factions and political intrigues which disfigure academic life. The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor is sometimes made on any but academic grounds. Our Cabinet is of the opinion that legislation should be undertaken to amend the University Acts in order to reconstitute Senates and Syndicates on the lines of the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission. It is particularly important to ensure that the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor is taken outside the sphere of party politics. I would commend to your notice the mode of appointment in vogue in Delhi University as this avoids most of the drawbacks associated with election or nomination.

(ii) Similarly, intrigues and party factions in Managing Committees are a major factor in the deterioration of school discipline. I have asked the Ministry of Education to frame specific proposals for the reconstitution of school managing committees in a manner which would minimise, if not eliminate altogether, political and group influence. I hope you will kindly issue instructions that these when received from the Ministry of Education are carefully examined and given effect to.

(iii) I am sure you will agree that we must take special measures for increasing public esteem for teachers at different levels. I would suggest that you may associate teachers and their organisations to a

greater extent in the formulation of educational policy and see that the social status of teachers is improved by giving them adequate recognition at all State and other public functions.

(iv) Another major reason for student unrest and fall in standards is the undue importance given to the final examination. Students are able to neglect their work throughout the year and cram in the last few months in order to pass and/or get a degree. I would suggest that you might issue instructions for the reconstruction of the system of examination so that adequate importance is given to regular class work in the assessment of the final achievement of the pupil. We might, for the present, confine these changes to internal examinations held by schools and colleges. So far as university examinations are concerned the matter should be examined further and suitable ways and means devised to improve them.

(v) Measures to encourage self-discipline among students must also be adopted immediately. I would suggest for your consideration the introduction of the House System, so that the students may develop a strong group loyalty and come into closer contact with selected teachers. I would also suggest that Councils of Monitors and Juvenile Courts of Honours may be instituted in all colleges and schools.

(vi) It is not necessary today to emphasize the value of social activities in shaping the character of students. I hope you will issue instructions so that special emphasis is laid on the improvement of material and social amenities in school and college life through voluntary labour contributed by the pupils themselves. One great handicap from which students, particularly in urban areas, suffer is the lack of adequate physical amenities in educational institutions. If play grounds, common rooms, open-air-theatres, swimming pools or gardens could be built or enlarged through student labour this would improve schools and colleges in many ways.

(vii) The value of extra-curricular activities is recognised on all hands, but sufficient measures are not taken to ensure that there is adequate provision for such activities. I would suggest that you may issue instructions for encouraging various types of extra-curricular activities specially in High schools and Higher Secondary schools and universities.

(viii) You will also agree that our education at present is sometimes lacking in a moral or ethical tone. India is a secular State, but this does not imply any disregard for moral values. We have a very rich spiritual heritage but the younger generation are sometimes insufficiently aware of this. I would suggest that an attempt should be made and ways and means devised to introduce an ethical content in instruction imparted in schools and colleges without reference to any particular religion.

4. I am asking the Ministry of Education to send to your Government more detailed proposals on each of these items, but I thought I should write to you personally, as this is a matter on which I feel strongly. I am sure you will take all necessary measures to ensure that our young men and women receive the best possible training to make them citizens worthy of our traditions and our hopes.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru.

NEW DELHI,
28th September, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am writing this in accordance with the direction contained in the Prime Minister's letter dated the 28th August 1954, addressed to Chief Ministers of all States.

The Prime Minister in his letter has endorsed the Central Advisory Board of Education's analysis of the causes of indiscipline among students and given his general support to the remedies recommended by the Board. You will no doubt agree that we have to attack this problem at various levels of which perhaps the most important is the Secondary stage. The Secondary schools supply teachers to Primary schools and students to colleges. Also, the Secondary boys and girls in early adolescence are liable to emotional disturbances which at times express themselves in acts of indiscipline. Further, State Governments can, through the Directorates, have an immediate influence upon Secondary schools. It may, therefore, be wise to make a beginning with Secondary schools and take measures for improving their general tone and discipline.

One of the major recommendations of the Board dealt with measures necessary to check the corroding influence on school discipline of intrigue and party factions in the Managing Committees of schools. If school discipline is to improve, these Committees must be reconstituted so as to minimise, if not eliminate altogether, political and group influence.

In this letter I wish to make certain suggestions for the reconstitution of Managing Committees. In view of the special relevance of these proposals to the question of school discipline, I am sure your Government will accord them the closest attention and take in hand their implementation, if necessary with local modifications, without delay.

One of the common handicaps from which many school managing committees suffer is its large size. It is extremely important that the size should be suitably restricted to enable the committee to function expeditiously and in a businesslike manner. I would like to suggest that in no circumstances should the size of a managing committee exceed 15.

Another defect from which many of our school managing committees suffer lies in the constitution of such committees by election on party lines. This exercises a most undesirable influence on the entire working and discipline of schools. It seems essential, therefore, that as far as possible the practice of elections should be eliminated from this sphere. I would accordingly make the following suggestions in respect of the constitution of managing committees.

1. About one-third of the members may be from among donors and regular subscribers. The appointment of these would be by rotation in the manner to be determined by the Director of Education.

2. About one-fifth of the members should be nominated by the President of the Board of Secondary Education to be selected on the joint recommendations of the Headmaster and the District Inspector of Schools. In case the President of the Board of Secondary Education is different from the Director of Education, one of these nominations should be made by the Director of Education and two by the President of the Board. The functions of these nominees, who should be chosen on the basis of experience or special knowledge of Secondary education, would be largely advisory. Their presence is expected to help the managing body to understand the conditions to be satisfied for the recognition and the measures to be taken for improving the efficiency and activities of the school. A similar arrangement has been adopted in the case of colleges affiliated to certain universities and it has been found to work satisfactorily.

3. About one-fifth of the members should be from the guardians of the pupils. The representatives of the guardians should be selected by the other members of the committee from the list of guardians actually borne on the admission register.

4. Two representatives of teachers and one nominee of the District Administration.

5. The Headmaster should be ex-officio Member-Secretary.

The Director of Education should have powers to remove a member of the managing committee of the school after giving him reasonable opportunity to explain. Pending normal appointments, the vacancies may be filled up by his nominees. When the Director of Education is also the President of the Board of Secondary Education, all such action taken by him should be reported to the Board for approval.

I would further suggest that the term of a school managing committee should in no case be less than seven years. There are perhaps good reasons why the term should be extended even further. You may have seen in the pamphlet on *Student Indiscipline* my reference to the practice of the New York State where the long term of membership of the Board of Regents ensures freedom from party interference and enables the school system to benefit from the accumulation of wide and varied educational experience. However, in the present circumstances we might first begin by extending it to seven years unless you feel that a longer term is feasible.

Yours sincerely,

Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
1st October, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER

I made certain suggestions regarding the constitution of the managing committees of High and Higher Secondary schools in my letter dated 28th September 1954. It is obvious, however, that for improving school discipline, it is not only necessary to reconstitute the managing committees on the suggested pattern but also to prescribe certain general standards and conditions for the recognition of such schools. In many States such standards and conditions have already been laid down, but in recent years it appears that there has been a certain laxity in their enforcement. This may be due partly to the great increase in the number of schools and partly to the great demand for schools among the people which lead to political and other forms of pressure on the administration.

In the present letter, I wish to make certain suggestions in respect of the recognition and general standards of High and Higher Secondary schools and their management by Local Boards. I feel that if they are adopted with local modifications in the light of the special circumstances of your State, this will help to improve the general condition of schools :

- (1) Every management should be required to draw up definite rules of service wherein the conditions of salary, leave, pension, provident fund, etc. are definitely laid down. Every teacher on his appointment should receive a copy of these conditions and execute an agreement for service in the school.
- (2) Every management should be required to provide an endowment for the proper running of the school. The Director of Education may draw up a scale of endowments for various types of schools after taking into consideration the strength of the school, the number of courses that the school proposes to undertake and the general requirements of efficiency.
- (3) Every management should satisfy the Directorate that adequate accommodation is available for the satisfactory running of the school and for games.
- (4) The conditions of service should be uniform for the whole State and there should be no differences, as far as possible, between teachers in State school and those in privately managed schools in point of scales of salary, conditions and security of service and other amenities.
- (5) The number of pupils admitted per class and the total strength of the whole school should in every case conform to the instructions of the Department, taking into consideration the material facilities and the staff available, as well as the number of subjects for which the school seeks recognition.

- (6) The scale of fees fixed by managements should be subject to approval by the Department of Education. It should not be open to any management to add arbitrarily to the special fees charged for various activities. It should also be guaranteed that such fees are spent for the objects for which they are collected. It might interest you to know that in one of the States it has recently been provided that such fees should be charged only once in a year and should not exceed the amount of the tuition fee for a month.
- (7) No member of the managing committee should be allowed to interfere directly or indirectly in the internal administration of the school, the discipline of the students or the duties of the teachers.

It is hardly necessary to add that the prescription of the above conditions would presume that the managements should obtain prior approval of the Director of Education before opening a school, which should be accorded only when the minimum conditions laid down have been fulfilled. It would also be desirable to provide that all the managing bodies are duly registered.

I would also like to draw your attention to the administration of schools maintained by Local Boards. I am sure you will agree that there is a great need for toning-up the administration of these institutions. I would suggest that each Local Board should have a small executive body for the management of its schools. The strength of this Body should not exceed nine including the District Inspector of Schools or some other nominee of the Directorate as an ex-officio member. In the case of local authorities, which have only one school in their charge, the headmaster should be an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee. In other cases, a senior Headmaster should by rotation be included as an ex-officio member.

It would also be necessary to ensure that the Boards do not interfere with the internal management of their schools or with the powers or duties of the headmasters. The Secondary Education Commission (vide page 186 of the Report) has noted with regret that in many cases members of Local Bodies do not hesitate to assume a self-imposed responsibility to visit schools, to examine the records and sometimes actually to interfere with school teaching. The Commission has deprecated in strong terms this tendency and recommended that no member of a Local Body, other than the members of the School Committee, should have the right to visit any of its schools or to interfere with its internal management in any manner. It is only the President of the Executive Committee who should be authorised to call for reports or information from the headmaster. You will agree that unless the status of the headmaster and teachers is properly safeguarded, schools will fail to function efficiently and exercise wholesome influence on the character and personality of their pupils.

There is one other matter to which I would like to draw your attention. It has sometimes been reported that teachers do not in fact draw the total emoluments to which they are entitled. Some associations of teachers have gone so far as to say that they would like all salaries of

teachers—whether in aided or private schools—to be paid through the agency of the Inspector of Schools. I doubt if this is practicable, but I trust that in framing the school codes, you will provide a clause which may offer teachers protection against unjustified cuts or deductions from their salary.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,

15th October, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

This is my third letter in accordance with the direction contained in the Prime Minister's letter of 28th August addressed to Chief Ministers of all States. In my last two letters, I made certain suggestions regarding the constitution of school managing committees and the general standards and conditions of recognition of schools. In the present letter I propose to offer certain suggestions towards reforming the constitution of the controlling bodies of the universities i.e. University Senates, Syndicates and Academic Councils in order to free them from intrigue and political influences. I would also like to suggest certain changes in the method of appointing Vice-Chancellors. I am sure you will give your best attention to these suggestions and take early steps to give them effect in respect of your university/universities.

You will recall that the University Education Commission has recommended that at least one half of the members of the Senate or Court should be teachers and the others outsiders and that all Principals of affiliated or constituent colleges should be ex-officio members. I suggest that about two-thirds of the members should be teachers and one-third outsiders and that if possible one senior teacher from each college may also be given a seat on this body. It is further necessary to provide that the appointment of teachers is, as far as possible, made by seniority and rotation instead of election. As you are aware, intrigues and factionalism often enter universities because of contested elections to various academic bodies. Care should also be taken so to arrange the colleges and subjects that no single college or faculty has unduly large or small representation.

The University Commission has also made important recommendations regarding the constitution of the Syndicate or the Executive Council. I feel that this should be forthwith implemented. I would also suggest that the size of this body may be somewhat smaller than that recommended by the Commission. It is doubtful if the High Courts and the Public Service Commissions would like to associate themselves with the University Syndicates and we may leave them out. It is also not necessary to have more than one nominee of the Chancellor on this body. It is suggested therefore that the maximum size of a Syndicate should be about 17. In the constitution of the Syndicate or Executive Council also, election should be avoided as far as possible and members appointed by office or by rotation.

The recommendations made by the University Commission regarding the constitution of the Academic Council also deserve attention and may be adopted immediately. Here also elections should be avoided in favour of seniority by rotation.

The key to any improvement in the universities is the Vice-Chancellor and we have to be specially careful about his appointment. As already

suggested by the Prime Minister, the mode of appointment in vogue in the Delhi University, a method which avoids most of the drawbacks associated with election or nomination may be adopted. Under this system, the Syndicate or Executive Council of the University nominates two distinguished educationists not directly connected with the university and the Visitor nominates the third. These three constitute a Selection Committee which submits to the Visitor a panel of not more than three names out of which one is appointed the Vice-Chancellor. In the case of the State Universities if the State Government so wish, the third member of the Selection Committee may be a nominee of the Chancellor. The main point is to ensure that there is no contest or canvassing for the post of the Vice-Chancellor, and the selection can be made out of a panel of names submitted by a body of experts who have knowledge and competence but are not in any way directly concerned with the administration and still less with the factions, where these exist, of the universities. If this method of appointment is accepted, there need be no objection to the re-election of the same person as the Vice-Chancellor for a second or even the third term.

As the implementation of some of these suggestions may require changes in statutes and in some cases amendments in University Acts, I have been desirous to draw your special attention to this aspect of the question where amendments of University Acts are already under consideration.

I am sure you will give these suggestions full consideration. With the setting up of the University Grants Commission and the possibility that larger funds may be available to improve University education, it is imperative that their machinery and administration is improved so as to take full advantage of the new facilities.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
29th October, 1954

MY DEAR MINISTER,

This is my fourth letter in accordance with the directions contained in the Prime Minister's letter of 28th August, 1954, addressed to Chief Ministers of all States. In my letter dated 15-10-54 I offered certain suggestion on the constitution of universities and appointment of Vice-Chancellors. You will agree, however, that the problem of student indiscipline has many other facets which require consideration.

In the present letter I wish to share with you some thoughts for raising the status of the teacher. You will agree that this is closely tied up with the question of his remuneration and other conditions of service. You will no doubt also agree that in these respects he has not had a fair deal so far, and this in spite of the best intentions of all educational administrators. I wish to confine myself to proposals which are largely non-financial in character. For reasons beyond our control, scales of salary cannot be improved to the necessary extent in the immediate future, but this makes it the more necessary to take such other measures as we can to raise the status of the teacher and make him feel an honoured member of society. In particular, I would request you to consider the suggestions outlined below :—

- (1) Teachers and their organisations may be associated in an increasing measure with the formulation of educational policies at all levels. Every encouragement should be given for the constitutional or professional bodies like Conferences of Headmasters of Secondary schools as well as of Elementary schools, and the educational authorities may consult such bodies in formulating and implementing educational programmes.
- (2) Teachers, on the basis of merit and seniority, should be appointed by rotation to important educational bodies like university senates as well as to welfare organisations engaged in constructive work.
- (3) Whenever a State contemplates any important piece of legislation, it may consider the advisability of appointing a committee of appropriate university teachers to examine it from an academic standpoint. The State Government are not of course bound to accept the advice of the committee but the fact that the university teachers have been consulted will not only tend to raise their status but ensure a critical and disinterested examination of proposals by persons who are comparatively free from political bias. The teachers will also benefit by such an arrangement because they will get an opportunity to study concrete proposals and thereby deepen their understanding of social reality.

- (4) In some universities there is a growing tendency to emphasise research at the cost of education. To quote Jose Ortega Y Gasset :

“One of the evils attending the confusion of the university with science has been the awarding of professorships, in keeping with the mania of the time, to research workers who are nearly always very poor professors, and regard their teaching as time stolen away from their work in the laboratory or the archives. This was brought home to me by experience during my years of study in Germany. I have lived close to a good number of the foremost scientists of our time, yet I have not found among them a single good teacher—so let no one come and tell me that the German University, as an institution, is a model.”* While research is important, due recognition should also be given to a teacher for his teaching qualities and for his share in building up the corporate life of the campus. It is obvious that this recognition can also take forms other than an increase in emoluments.

In regard to the Primary and Secondary teachers, I would like to make the following suggestions :—

1. The State may organise special receptions for Secondary and Primary school teachers by the Head of the State and the Chief Minister. Also, if the Chief Minister and other Ministers make it a point to meet some Secondary and Primary school teachers at every place that they visit, it would add to the status of the teaching profession in the eyes of the general public. The reception given by the President and the Education Minister of India to Primary school teachers of Delhi some time back was greatly appreciated by them as adding to their prestige in the country-side. In addition, representative teachers should be invited to all State functions.

2. The organisation of refresher courses and holiday camps for teachers would go a long way to strengthen the morale of the profession. The All-India Headmasters' Seminar which was held last year at Taradevi and the eight regional seminars held during this year have had a very good effect on the morale of teachers. The former was attended by 50 Headmasters from 25 States and cost less than Rs. 20,000/-. The expenditure on other regional seminars has been approximately of the same order. A State Headmasters' seminar on similar lines would cost much less. If two such Seminars are held in every State every year, some 100 Headmasters would be able to benefit from them. If, in addition, another sum of Rs. 40,000/- is spent on Secondary school teachers and Rs. 50,000/- on Primary school teachers for holding holiday camps and organising convalescent homes, it will not only improve their professional competence but give them a new sense of confidence and the feeling that the State and society are genuinely interested in their welfare and hold their work in proper esteem. You will agree that a sum of rupees one lakh a year thus spent should not prove a prohibitive proposition for even the smallest of States, while the corresponding return in terms of human and educational values would be immeasurably large.

3. The larger Secondary schools explore the possibility of introducing the proctorial system by which each teacher is made responsible for a number of pupils living in his locality. Each student will then have some member of the staff to whom he can confidently look as guide, 'philosopher and friend' and to whom he can go for personal counsel on any matter.

4. Selected teachers, on the basis of meritorious work, may be invited to the State Capital to come and live as guests in Government House for week-ends, or if conditions permit for about a week. I found in Turkey that there is a district-wise competition, and the Headmaster of the best school in each district is invited by the provincial Governor and after a nation-wide competition, the Headmaster of the best school is invited to come and stay for a few days with the President of the Republic.

I hope you will kindly consider these suggestions and take early steps to put them into effect with such modifications as you may consider necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
4th November, 1954.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In this fifth letter in the series on school discipline, I wish to place before you some suggestions for the reform of examinations. You are aware of the various evil effects of an undue emphasis on examinations at various levels. Such over-emphasis has tended to retard the initiative of the teacher, stereotype the curriculum, encourage mechanical and lifeless methods of teaching, discourage the spirit of experimentation and generally place the stress on wrong or unimportant things. It is hardly necessary for me to point to other undesirable features of this undue stress on examinations. Intended primarily to measure the academic attainment of students, examinations do not test the other aspects of their development. The examiners often forget that the school of today is concerned not only with intellectual pursuits but also with the emotional and social development of the child, his physical and mental health, his social adjustment, in a word, with the all-round development of his personality. If examinations are to be of real value, they must take into consideration this new outlook and attempt to assess the all-round progress of the examinee.

2. Even as a test of intellectual attainment, the validity of the present pattern of examinations has been widely questioned. It has been repeatedly pointed out, for instance, that the present method of examining it by means of essay-type questions has obvious limitations, as the evaluation depends on too many subjective factors. The likes and dislikes of the examiner, the chance selection of topics of preparation by the examinee and the elegance of the style may have a decisive influence on the results. These examinations cannot therefore be relied upon as an accurate test even in their own limited field.

3. The undue emphasis on the final examination has other and even more undesirable effects. In the brochure on '*Student Indiscipline*' I have discussed them at some length and would in this letter merely point out that as a result of such undue emphasis, the pupils tend to neglect their work throughout the year. Since their future will be largely determined by the final examination without regard to what they may have done during the whole year, they place all their hopes in passing the examination. They therefore cram for the last few months or weeks, and sometimes do permanent damage to their health. Because they do not study steadily throughout the year, they lose the habit of continuous and sustained work. What is even worse, they are at times tempted to resort to unfair practices to make up for the shortcomings of lack of work for the whole year. One of the basic causes of student indiscipline can be traced to this unsatisfactory attitude towards the final examination.

4. If these and allied defects of the examination system are to be removed, the following reforms should be urgently carried out :

- (a) The number of external examinations should be cut down to the minimum. Attention is particularly invited to the recommendation of the Secondary Education Commission that

there should be only one public examination to indicate the completion of the school course (vide p. 151 of the Secondary Education Commission Report).

- (b) A reasonable proportion of marks—at least about 20%—in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination should be reserved for the class work done by the pupil during the last two years of his school life. The cumulative record at the end of each quarter may be sent to the Board of Secondary Education or the Directorate (depending on who conducts the S.S.L.C. examination) and may be tabulated there so that the marks can be added to those obtained in the examination itself. I have already forwarded a recommendation on these lines to the Vice-Chancellors of Universities and Chairmen of Boards of Secondary Education. I hope you will now kindly pursue the matter with the authorities concerned and ensure that the proposal is put into effect without undue delay. I must also make it clear that this is in addition to the Prime Minister's suggestion that the proposed changes in the examination system should first be confined to internal examinations in schools and colleges.
- (c) Within the school itself, the emphasis on one all important annual examination should be reduced. Some schools have already abandoned such examinations and achieved good results. They have introduced periodical weekly and monthly tests for purposes of promotion. One system which keeps an effective check on work throughout the year is to have two terminal examinations in addition to the annual examination. A total made up of 30% of the marks obtained in the first terminal, 40% of those in the second terminal and 60% of those in the annual gives the final evaluation for the year.
- (d) In fact, neither the external nor the internal examination, singly or jointly, can give a complete picture of a pupil's all-round progress at any stage of education. For this purpose, a proper system of school records should be maintained indicating for every pupil the work done by him in school from day to day, month to month, term to term and from year to year. As an example of a good record form for use in schools, reference may be made to the Ministry's pamphlet No. 156 (*School Record*) which is based on work done by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and the National Committee on Cumulative Records appointed by the U. S. Office of Education. The U. S. A. Record form is elaborate and detailed and may not be feasible for us due to the general lack of experience of our teachers and the non-availability of reliable measures of psychological attributes. There is however nothing to prevent us from introducing simple cards for recording information on the most salient aspects of a child's development and this is what the pamphlet mentioned above seeks to provide. With some modifications here and there, it would, I feel, prove suitable for use in schools throughout India.
- (e) I would also suggest that the subjective element, which is unavoidable in the present purely essay-type of examination,

should be reduced by introducing side by side certain objective tests of attainments. Objective tests have also their drawbacks, for they may sometimes be a test of memory and information rather than of judgment or powers of reasoning. It is precisely in these fields that the essay-type of examination, if judiciously used, has certain advantages. It cannot however be accepted as the only valid method of measuring achievement. One of its greatest disadvantages is that it gives undue weight to verbal facility in which so many individual differences exist. Judicious combination of objective tests and essay-type of examinations, if correlated with the day-to-day achievements of pupils as reflected in their daily class-work can however offer a fairly reliable estimate of the abilities and the attainment of pupils. Since in any case we cannot altogether do away with examinations, such a combination seems the wisest course to adopt.

5. I would also request you to consider one other suggestion. If there are any schools in the State which because of the quality of its teachers, its past traditions and facilities for various types of curricular and co-curricular activities can be regarded as outstanding, you may kindly consider giving them a greater latitude in the matter of conducting their own examinations. The pupils in such schools need not take the S. S. L. C. examination but sit in tests and examinations devised by the school itself. The certificate given by such a school may be given the same recognition as the S. S. L. Certificates. In order to ensure that there is no cause for complaint about standards, such 'free' schools may be selected on the recommendation of special committees consisting of representatives of the Universities, the Secondary Boards and the Directorate appointed under rules framed for the purpose, and subjected to periodic scrutiny.

6. As I am going out of the country for about six weeks, I shall not be able to write to you again till some time in the first week of January, 1955. I then propose to place before you some further suggestions for reform of Secondary education, with special reference to co-curricular and social activities and measures of self-discipline among pupils.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
3rd February, 1955

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am thankful to you for the interest you have shown in the various suggestions for dealing with the problem of student indiscipline made in this series of letters. In the present letter, which is sixth in the series, I wish to draw your attention to certain activities which will help to increase the initiative and sense of responsibility of students. Some of these activities will also add to the material and social amenities of schools and colleges. Together they will, I feel confident, contribute directly to an improvement of atmosphere in educational institutions.

I am sure you will agree that the sense of responsibility grows only through exercise of responsibility. Where pupils live in an authoritarian atmosphere, they are bound to lack initiative and self-confidence. Besides, such an atmosphere tends to suppress their personality. The result is that at the slightest opportunity, they are likely to break bounds and express themselves in various types of unsocial and anti-social actions. One of the best ways of checking such tendencies in the young is to give them ample opportunity of self-expression in socially useful and creative programmes of various types.

Placing of responsibility on students will develop their self-discipline and self-reliance and foster a spirit of trust and shared responsibility. As the spirit of responsibility grows among them, they should be increasingly associated in various programmes of the school. Subject to the guidance and over-all control of the Principal or Headmaster, they may even be given an opportunity to perform certain functions which are normally regarded as the prerogative of the management. The participation of students in such management activities will remove distrust, create a sense of corporate responsibility and contribute effectively towards training in citizenship.

In keeping with this important principle, I would like to suggest the following measures for introducing increasing self-government in schools and colleges :—

1. Some of the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline may be transferred to students by instituting a well-conceived House system. The Prime Minister in his letter has also endorsed the suggestion for the introduction of such a system. Under this system, the pupils would be divided into groups of 20 or 25. Each group would be the special responsibility of a teacher who should, however, be assisted by one or more monitors. The monitors should be selected not only for academic distinction but also for their qualities of character. I need hardly add that while the House System has obvious advantages, it may also at times lead to the growth of factions and narrowness among pupils. There is also a risk that sometimes the teacher may acquire an almost inquisitorial power

over his charges. These are however avoidable and I am sure you will take necessary precautions against the occurrence of such risks.

2. The monitors of different classes together with certain members of the staff may constitute a council for the maintenance of discipline in the institution as a whole. The Principal or the Headmaster should recognise these monitors as leaders in their respective classes and the council as the collective leadership of the entire institution.

3. The council of monitors may also function as a juvenile Court of Honour. It is common experience that children when put on their honour tend to refrain from indiscipline and other anti-social acts. Some universities which are experimenting with Courts of Honour and Proctorial Boards have found that these are quite effective in controlling even serious situations like strikes and mass action of students.

4. As an example of delegation of power to students, selected students may be placed in charge of school libraries or organisation of school sports and games. It may be possible to develop a Students' Library, as distant from the School or College Library, which may be entirely managed by students and assist poor but needy students by providing them with standard textbooks and reference books for stipulated periods.

The Prime minister has in his letter drawn your attention to the need of improving material and social amenities in schools and colleges and the possibility of doing so through voluntary labour. I am sure you will agree about the immense possibilities that can be developed by enlisting student labour under the leadership of teachers. Of the many benefits that will accrue, I would draw your attention to only two. On the one hand, the teachers will come into closer contact with their students. On the other, the students will find creative outlets for their energy.

Projects should, however, at least at the beginning be mainly of the type which add to the amenities of the students themselves. Such projects are likely to have a greater appeal for them. Also by canalising their enthusiasm in such work, they learn that in working for the community, they are at the same time working for themselves. Some of the possible types of activities may be listed but this is only illustrative and by no means exhaustive. Thus students can build for themselves playgrounds, stadia, theatres. They can undertake the improvement of gardens. In the case of older students, their labour may be utilised in building hostels etc. That this is practicable has been shown by the experience of Shri Bhau Rao Patel of Rayat Sikshan Sanstha of Satara (Bombay), who has constructed buildings for one college, four training centres, many High and Primary schools and some hostels almost entirely by the labour of students. Wherever necessary, such work may be paid so that needy students can maintain themselves out of the proceeds.

It is hoped that working for the school community will develop in students the habit and the desire to work for the community at large. As soon as students from schools and colleges show any interest in such social work, be it for the improvement of life in urban or rural areas, they should be given every encouragement and guidance. On the educational

front, they can teach adults to read and write and develop crafts. In the field of agriculture, they can participate in almost every phase of the agricultural activity—ploughing, planting, compost-making, irrigation, preparing of seed-beds, transplanting, harvesting. They can contribute to the social life of the people by mixing with the villagers in informal gatherings and organising and taking part in folk dances, music and games. In the field of health and hygiene, they can teach sanitation and help the locality in programmes of cleanliness and preventive hygiene.

It cannot be too strongly urged that all such work must remain on a voluntary basis. Unless boys and girls go into social service programmes because they are genuinely interested in social service, the consequences will not be satisfactory to the public or to themselves. This however is a point I need not labour.

The Ministry of Education have sponsored schemes for the enlistment of students in Youth Camps for labour service, which have so far had a very satisfactory response. I may draw your attention to this Ministry letters No. F.5-21/54-D. 7 dated 11th May, 21st June and 2nd September, 1954, addressed to the Vice-Chancellors of Universities and Education Secretaries of all State Governments on the subject of Youth Camps and Labour Service by Students and to the Ministry's brochure entitled "Work Camps Management".

The participation of students in N.C.C. and A.C.C. programmes will also have a healthy influence. Before I conclude, I would like to mention also the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movement. This provides healthy and useful outlets for the energies of the children, makes them more self-reliant and helps to develop in them a spirit of service to the community. However, I propose to deal with this and other-extra curricular activities in some detail in my next letter.

With greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
26th March, 1955

MY DEAR MINISTER,

My last letter was largely devoted to a discussion of activities that are calculated to develop initiative and a sense of responsibility in pupils of various grades. I had there made a passing reference to scouting and guiding, the N.C.C. and A.C.C. and wish in this and the next letter to develop the points I had made and make more detailed suggestions toward the organisation of such extra-curricular activities.

It is hardly necessary for me to tell you how extra-curricular activities promote a variety of important educational ends. They make the pupils increasingly self-reliant, develop their initiative, teach them social cooperation, increase their interest in the school and discover and develop their special abilities and aptitudes. Perhaps their greatest value lies in developing in the pupils a true sense of discipline by offering them opportunities to work in fields of their own choice. We all know how things we have ourselves elected to do are never neglected or done in a slipshod manner. They are thus the most effective means for creating a sense of responsibility and personal pride by holding up high standards of conduct.

Unfortunately, there are many parents and teachers who even today criticise the place and importance given to these activities in the school programmes. Nor is such criticism confined to our country alone. They seem to fear that because of the time and attention devoted to extra-curricular activities, class work must suffer. I am sure you will agree that this is a wrong approach. Whatever may have been the position in the past, the school of today exists not merely for promoting scholarship but for assisting in the total development of the child's personality. In respect of academic attainments also, such fears do not seem justified. Some Western pedagogues have investigated the problem and their findings invariably are that extra-curricular activities have in no way interfered with the progress of pupils in purely academic fields. As a matter of fact, not only has participation no adverse effect on scholarship, but some research workers have reported in favour of a positive relationship.

I have no wish to tire you with quotations, but I cannot resist the temptation of bringing to your notice two case studies that have a direct bearing on the subject. A.S. Swanson conducted an investigation of Kansas City High School students before and after participation several years ago and concluded: "There is little evidence that participation in extra-curricular activities affects scholarship". Merle Prunty in her survey of the Tulsa Oklahoma High School found that "Controlled extra-curricular participation does not lower scholarship, but rather stimulates the students to improve their scholarship records".

You are no doubt aware of the change in attitude towards such activities which has taken place over the last four or five decades. Here

in India, Rabindranath Tagore in his School at Santiniketan recognised over fifty years ago the unity which informs all expression of life. He therefore introduced courses in which play and work were inextricably mingled. Modern pedagogic theory is becoming increasingly aware that any policy which accentuates the dualism between curricular and extra-curricular activities is unfortunate. Such a conception hampers the full development of both these programmes as it fails to recognise that each can contribute to and enrich the other. Discussing this issue, our own Secondary Education Commission has observed : "We do not visualize that these (the new Secondary) schools will have dull, routine-ridden, formal lessons in the class plus a number of independent unrelated "extra-curricular" activities which have intrinsic relationship with them either in content or methods. The entire programme of the school will be visualised as a unity and inspired by a psychologically congenial and stimulating approach, the so-called "work" being characterised by the feeling of joy and self-expression usually associated with play and hobbies, and these latter having something of the meaningfulness and purpose which are normally considered a special feature of academic work." (P. 218).

In Gandhiji's conception of Basic education also, one of the most important elements is the denial of any sharp difference between work, play and study. All school work must be correlated and form integral parts of a new pattern of life. Growing recognition of this fact in the West is seen in the framing of programmes based on the essentially complementary nature of curricular and extra-curricular activities. That is why the phraseology has also changed and we speak today of "co-curricular activities", "co-lateral activities" and "curricularised activities" rather than extra-curricular activities. What till now has been regarded as outside the curriculum is thus recognised to be a necessary element of the curriculum itself.

In regard to the organisation of extra-curricular activities, experience is general that this should follow certain well-defined principles if the programmes are to be fully effective. The most important of these principles appear to be the following :—

1. Extra-curricular activities should as far as possible be organised during regular school hours.

If a school were fully residential, or at least all the pupils lived in the vicinity of the school, there may have been some case for organising some of these activities outside school hours. In the conditions prevailing in our country, to organise them outside school hours means denying the opportunity of participation to many, perhaps the majority. Besides, even those who participate cannot benefit fully because of the lack of amenities like school meals, school baths etc. Wherever possible, provision should therefore be made to have them in regular school periods. Scheduling them in regular periods not only offers all students an opportunity for participation but also lends to the programme dignity and official sanction and creates the demand that the time provided for is profitably spent.

2. As far as possible all students should participate in these activities.

If extra-curricular activities are good for one student, they are good for all. We must, however, remember two things. The same activity



may not appeal to all in the same degree. Also, compulsion will take away the real value of such activities. Hence, participation should not be compulsory and students should be given freedom to choose between various activities. It may also be mentioned that participation should be limited if the pupil is physically unsuited for full participation or if as a result, the student's regular school work suffers too much. Limitation may be imposed also if he spreads himself out so thin that he does his extra-curricular activities in only a fair fashion when he can and should be doing them much better. Such restriction will not only benefit him but also provide additional opportunities for other students. In almost all activities concerned with a pupil's preparation for life—whether it be through formal study or through such extra-curricular task—concentration has great virtue for both the individual and the school.

3. Extra-curricular activities should be considered a part of the regular work of teachers.

If these activities are to be treated as an integral part of the school's work and not merely as "outsiders", then it is only fair to the teachers that any extra load placed on them in this behalf is recognised in some definite way. Such accreditation will improve the quality of extra-curricular activities by giving them due place in the school programmes.

4. The teacher organiser should be an adviser and not a dictator.

A teacher sometimes finds it difficult to be anything but a dictator. Much of his training has been in preparation for and practice in a superior-inferior relationship. There are limitations to such an attitude even in the formal work of the classroom. The best teachers are those who can evoke the greatest interest and response of the pupils themselves. Outside the class, such an attitude is an even greater drawback. It is quite obvious that if the teacher tends to dominate, particularly in an organisation of the extra-curricular type, he defeats the very purpose of the organisation. Instead of developing the initiative of the pupils, he tends to curb them and thus make the whole affair unproductive from the point of view of the pupils. Besides, such a hectoring attitude is bound to develop in the pupils an antipathy to the organisation or the activity or to both. The result is that even if they are unwillingly compelled to participate, they will break away at the first opportunity. The teacher has therefore to be very careful about his role in all such activities. Being older than the students, having more experience, more maturity and better judgment he is bound to exercise leadership, but he should try to assist in the conduct of these activities in a friendly and helpful association.

5. Extra-curricular activities should be adequately administered and supervised.

Because the Headmaster is responsible for every thing that goes on in the school, it is necessary that he should have an overall control of extra-curricular work also. He should however do this, not in the manner of a dictator, but as the leader of a group of free men. Even in a small school where it is possible for the Headmaster to administer and supervise the extra-curricular programmes by himself, he should associate some teachers and a few selected pupils, at least in an advisory capacity. In a larger institution, it is essential to appoint a properly delegated and

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charged committee representing both the students and the staff for developing, coordinating and administering these activities but with ultimate responsibility resting with the Headmaster.

6. Extra-curricular activities are not all important.

While all such co-curricular activities should be given adequate recognition, we should not commit the opposite mistake of giving them an extravagant importance. This is a danger which has become a real one in some schools in the west, where, e.g., the members of a football team are treated as superior beings, exempt from the general school discipline. We must be clear that it is quite wrong to suggest that extra-curricular activities represent a complete and adequate programme of educational opportunities. These activities do offer excellent supplementary settings and should be effectively utilised but without exaggerating their efficacy. A school with only extra-curricular activities would be as defective as one without any.

In my next letter, I propose to make a few suggestions regarding the organisation of some of the more important of these extra-curricular activities.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI

28th April 1955

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In my last letter of 26th March, 1955, I had said I would send some suggestions regarding the organisation of extra-curricular activities in schools. They can be only illustrative and should not be regarded either as exhausting the various possibilities or as rigid patterns that must be followed without any variation. Extra-curricular activities may, and perhaps ought to, vary from school to school. As you are aware, the tendency in recent times is to describe them as co-curricular rather than extra-curricular activities in order to bring out clearly that they should form an integral part of the education of a child. Various factors will govern the organisation of such activities depending upon the location, the resources and the interests and aptitudes of the staff and students. The reference in this letter is therefore only to some of the more important of such activities.

1. Scout and Guide Activities

Scouting (and this includes guiding) is one of the most effective means for training of character and developing qualities of good citizenship. Through its various games and activities, scouting fosters in students a spirit of social service, good behaviour, respect for leaders, loyalty to the State and a preparedness to meet any emergency. I would, therefore, strongly recommend that scouting and guiding should be made as attractive as possible for school children. I feel that, short of compulsion, every effort should be made to bring as many children as possible into the Scouts and Guides movement. Scouting and guiding are particularly valuable in the earlier stages of a pupil's career, for they inculcate habits of discipline without any suggestion of regimentation or colourless conformity. In the last Conference of Education Secretaries, I had therefore suggested that at least up to the age of 13+, children should be given every encouragement for joining the Scouts or Guides. It would be necessary for the State Government to give adequate financial assistance to the movement, secure suitable sites for camps and extend recognition to the teachers who take an active part in its programmes.

2. National Cadet Corps

During the last few years, the Government of India have instituted the Junior Division of the National Cadet Corps which is open to pupils of schools. Owing to the heavy cost of the scheme, many of the State Governments have not been able to expand facilities for the Corps in proportion to the demand for training. Pupils have however been greatly attracted by the Corps and there has been general demand for its expansion. In order to ensure that the most effective use is made of this somewhat more extensive form of training, I am inclined to suggest that pupils only in the senior classes of school should be admitted to the Corps. If enrolment is confined to boys and girls of 15—17, the Corps is

likely to have a much greater impact on school life as this would mean that a larger proportion of senior boys and girls would get the benefit of training in the Corps. I would like to add that in recruiting cadets for the Corps, preference should be given to those who have experience of scouting or guiding. Personally, I would even be prepared to make this a necessary condition for enrolment in the Corps.

3. Auxiliary Cadet Corps

In view of the cost of N.C.C., a simplified form of service known as the Auxiliary Cadet Corps has recently been instituted. The Corps is not military in character and is administered mainly through the teachers. Its programme includes various types of social welfare activities and there is a proposal to develop the Corps into a kind of National Youth Service. If it is confined to children of 13+ and above and preference is given to those who have some experience of scouting and guiding, it can serve two purposes. On the one hand, it will give an indirect fillip to the scouts and guides movement, and on the other develop a sense of discipline and service among the adolescents. The facilities of this Corps can be generally made available to pupils in all schools. Insistence on the improvement of physique and provision of social welfare activities as an integral part of education will help to improve discipline, give pupils greater confidence and make for better enjoyment of life.

4. Training in First Aid, Junior Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance

These activities have a special value because they enable the pupils to render useful forms of service and thus develop a sense of personal and social worth. It will be of great advantage to the children as well as to the community if every pupil is trained in First Aid and Junior Red Cross work and if some of them receive training in St. John's Ambulance work. Such training can be very profitably utilised on the occasion of fairs, festivals, epidemics or floods or whenever large congregations of people gather.

5. Educational Tours and Youth Hostels Movements

Educational tours satisfy one of the most important psychological urges of the youth. The adolescent is by nature a wanderer, physically as well as mentally. It is natural for him to desire to take trips, to see new things and places and to meet new people. The traditional school practice of putting him in a seat and requiring him to remain there for long stretches of time may be necessary for learning certain things, but it puts an undue strain upon the natural restlessness of the young. History, Geography and Literature (specially travel and adventure stories) do to some extent satisfy his thirst for novelty and adventure, but the satisfaction is incomplete and vicarious. To quote Rabindranath Tagore: "It is my firm conviction that there is a connection between movement of body and movement of mind. For this reason I think the ideal school is a travelling school. Education given in a closed schoolroom is cut off from most of the strenuous drama of life. A fixed classroom education destroys the human harmony of body and mind, so that the body remains unskilled and the mind listless. It gives familiarity with words but not with things."

Educational tours supply experiences which are at once educational and personal. In other words, they sharpen students' understanding of things and people by fostering interest in and acquaintance with the affairs, the history, and the aspirations of the community. It may be mentioned here that in Japan, every Secondary school pupil must, before the completion of his or her course, make a tour of places of historical interest or natural beauty in Japan. These journeys are financed by the State so that even the poorest pupil is not denied the opportunity of seeing all places of interest in the country.

In recent times, there has been a great development of the youth hostels movement to meet this demand for travel by young people. Throughout Europe, a chain of such hostels makes it possible for young students to travel at a nominal cost. A beginning has recently been made in India. Through the establishment of youth hostels, it will become increasingly possible for our young people to visit different parts of the country and meet in an atmosphere of cordiality and understanding. The extension of this movement should be looked upon as an integral part of the national scheme for education. As it can contribute very greatly to inter-state understanding, it deserves a very high priority in our schemes of activities for the young. Special mention may be made of the hostels which have been or are being built under this scheme to enable young people to travel almost up to the base of the Kanchinchanga or to go to the famed Pindari glacier.

6. Sports and Athletics

Apart from their physical and recreational significance, sports and athletics possess great educational value. Participation in these activities promotes qualities of sportsmanship which are of the greatest social import. By playing for a team, the pupil learns to subordinate himself for the good of the group. There is perhaps no better way of learning discipline and cooperation which are essential conditions for social welfare, indeed for social survival.

The present organisation of games and sports in schools and colleges leaves much to be desired. It is only a very small proportion of pupils—these are generally members of the various school elevens—who get the opportunity to play. The institutions also seem to be more interested in preparing for and winning matches than in using games and sports for their educational value. This not only denies opportunity to the average pupil, but is also harmful for the young "heroes" who, when unduly lionised, develop attributes which often make adjustment to work and life more difficult. If the rich educational potentialities of sports and athletics are to be fully exploited, both teachers and pupils must change their present attitude to them, and use them for developing cooperation and discipline among all members of the school.

7. Dramatics

Drama and what one says of drama will apply with some modification to music, can be an educational medium of great value. It serves both the individual participants and the school as a whole. To the actors, drama gives vocabulary, articulation, confidence, wit, refinement, imaginative sympathy and training in cooperation. To the school, it offers an

educational medium of rare power. Experience has shown that a dull and disinterested class may be transformed into an enthusiastic and lively group when a few lessons have been dramatised under the direction of a skilful teacher. Another value to the school is to be found in the necessity of cooperation between its various departments whenever the production of a play is undertaken. It is also an excellent means of interesting parents and the general public in the activities of the school and in particular in the educational progress of the children.

The very efficacy of the drama makes it necessary to exercise the greatest care in the choice of a play. I have on occasions come across plays selected for school performance which catered to a local prejudice or emphasised some parochial and narrow interest, or worse still, could create a sense of contempt or hatred for another country or community. I would suggest that the selection of a play may be entrusted to a small committee, preferably of teachers with perhaps one or two senior students. The schedule for the year should include a variety of types—historical plays, comedies, fantasies, farces, musical plays etc. The use of several One-Act Plays is perhaps preferable to a few full-length plays, because of the additional educational opportunities offered and the added variety. A larger number of plays is also likely to give opportunities to a larger number of pupils. Plays dealing with immorality and controversial social issues should be eschewed, while the greatest care should be taken in selecting tragedies.

8. Debating

For developing intellectual interests and ability, facility of expression, clear thinking, good sportsmanship, self-reliance, confidence and other allied qualities, debating has few equals. The organisation of debates in schools has not however been carried out systematically or with a view to giving all children an opportunity to develop. In inter-school debating contests, it is well known that it is generally the coach or teacher (and not the student) who selects and organises the argument. The student's role is sometimes confined merely to memorising and reproducing the speech. Sides are selected and roles assigned before the student has begun to study the question. He is thus compelled to "dope" out arguments which he has not himself thought out. The young have a natural tendency to mistake mere assertion, especially if it is loud and emphatic, for proof. Our methods of debating do little to correct this tendency. Some young debators tend to depend on ridicule for discrediting the opponent and do not realise that ridicule is the weapon of only those who have no argument. It is thus no wonder that many a glib student, instead of becoming a keen debater, has ended only by becoming a kind of intellectual "bluffer".

Humour is a great solvent of problems. The young are in any case apt to be terribly in earnest and take themselves far too seriously. Debates are a corrective, for in a debate one may even have to speak against one's convictions. This gives mental agility and resilience, and what is more important, the capacity to see that there may be another point of view. In addition, debates can be a means of developing humour and a sense of proportion. In Western countries, especially in the United Kingdom, wit and humour are regarded as the mark of a good debater. Our young people do not use wit and humour as much as is desirable.

This is a pity, for through debates they can learn to laugh at themselves and see how others look at them.

Then again, schools do not generally make as extensive a use of debates as is desirable. Generally, training in debating is confined to a select few. The selection of topics also leaves much to be desired. Students are often required to debate on political, philosophical and moral topics on which even the most learned are sharply divided. The pupils in such a situation can merely reflect the views of the proponents or opponents of the proposition and do not get an opportunity to think for themselves. Authority is important but it does not constitute debate.

I am convinced that many defects in our present use of debates can be removed. The stress on coaching, memorisation of prepared speeches and the restriction of the activity to a very small proportion of pupils will go as extemporaneous debates are organised more frequently. In fact I would like to see every teacher hold unprepared class debates in which every pupil took part. Greater care should also be taken in the selection of the subjects. We should certainly select subjects that have significance, are interesting and profitable, but the greatest importance should be given to subjects that are suited to the age, maturity, and level of judgment of the pupils. The questions most appropriate for school debates would generally be those concerning the school and its activities, but serious subjects need not be altogether eschewed. There should also be occasional debates on humorous subjects. Lightness without frivolity is a great social art which pupils can learn only while they are still young. It should also be emphasised that the true object of debate is training the mind and developing the capacity to see and meet opposing points of view. In this way, pupils will learn to value the truth and its dispassionate search.

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There are many other co-curricular activities which schools can and should develop to the best of their ability and resources. There is no end to the list of such activities and only a few others of the more important ones like hiking, rowing, swimming, music, drawing and painting and gardening can be mentioned. In fact, an ingenious teacher can go on multiplying the list and in this he can get suggestions and support from his more enterprising pupils. Such activities add to the zest of school life and provide a release for the creative talents and social aptitudes of children.

I would go further and say that such activities are a necessary condition for the proper development of children into useful citizens of the State. We today complain of lack of discipline and of anti-social activities of young people, but these are often due to the fact that the young do not have proper outlets for their abundant energy. Provision of such channels in the school has a special value. Children in school are more amenable to control by their teachers than young men and women in colleges and universities. If, therefore, children are given the chance of developing a sense of responsibility and leadership through creative work while they are still in school, they will grow up as disciplined young men and women who will avoid many of the excesses of those who have had no such opportunity.

I will conclude this letter by repeating once again what is becoming almost the burden of my song. The success of all these activities will largely depend upon the interest shown by the teaching staff. The quality of the teacher is therefore the decisive factor for the success of all our projects. While the pupils should be encouraged in every way to stand on their own feet and develop these activities through their own initiative, an enthusiastic teacher should whenever necessary be at hand to help and guide them. I would suggest that every teacher, as far as possible, should be required to devote a reasonable portion of his time to co-curricular activities and that this time should be taken into account in fixing his maximum hours of work. Not only so, but every facility should be given to teachers to improve their own competence in these fields. Special camps and training centres should be opened for teachers so that they may equip themselves to be the "friend, philosopher and guide" of the pupils in their charge.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

NEW DELHI,
October 1, 1955.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

The letters I have written to you in this series have till now dealt with the problem of discipline in its external aspects. I have sent for your consideration suggestions about changes in the constitution of various educational authorities, measures for the improvement of status and quality of teachers and proposals for giving pupils creative outlets for their energies. I have no wish to minimise the importance of these measures and I am convinced that if they are adopted, there will be a great improvement in the atmosphere of schools and colleges. Nevertheless, I must say that they deal with the externals of behaviour and cannot by themselves bring about the change we desire. For this we need what for lack of a better name I would describe as a revival of faith.

I do not use the phrase 'revival of faith' in any narrow or dogmatic sense. It does not imply belief in any particular creed or dogma, but it does assume that there is a system of values which is widely recognised and respected. Without a common system of values, no society can flourish, and in fact the individuals constituting it tend to languish. The Sanskrit term 'dharma' brings out this essential characteristic; it is that which binds or holds together the members of a community. In an earlier letter I have pointed out how the loss of sense of 'belonging' is responsible for youthful maladjustment and discontent. Steps must therefore be taken to inculcate in the young a system of values which binds them together as members of one community.

I am sure you will agree that this sense of common values must be based on respect for the individual. The whole democratic attitude has been built up on such respect. The individual is unique and uniqueness of the individual involves that every person in some respect or other differs from others. Toleration of, or one should rather say, respect for differences is thus an essential element of democracy. Such respect is based on the recognition that in spite of widespread differences in individual character and expression, there are certain values which apply equally to all. Recognition of this fact is the basis on which we can consider the introduction of an ethical element in school and collegiate instruction without reference to any particular religion.

Respect for the individual is in the end based on a recognition of the dignity of man. It is this faith which has enabled man to overcome the limitations of his physical weakness and the obstacles set on his path by the world outside. The whole course of human history is a record of the way in which man has triumphed over the baser elements in his nature and set before himself the urge for a fuller and freer life. The reason why India has survived in spite of poverty, hunger, disease and political vicissitudes is her faith in values which transcend the demands of our daily experience. She has valued the quest for truth regardless of differ-

ences in its manifestation. She has sought beauty in its deepest meaning. She has hungered for the good of all mankind. *Satyam, Sundaram* and *Sivam* have thus been the principles that have governed India's destiny. *Today*, there is a special need to stress this point. Not only is the urge towards the creation of new values often absent in the younger generation, but it is at times lacking even in a proper awareness of the rich moral and spiritual heritage which has sustained India throughout her history.

Without entering into any discussion about the relation of religion and morality, we may still admit that the whole question of moral and spiritual education is linked up with the highly controversial issues of religious instruction. If religious education is interpreted to mean the teaching of the dogma or creed of any particular faith, the Indian Constitution prohibits the provision of such education in a State institution. The Public schools and colleges of the country must therefore be non-denominational and can have no part in propagating any one of the numerous forms of belief regarding man and his relation to the supernatural world. In these circumstances, parents who are interested in a specific type of religious education for their children can provide such education by their own efforts or enrol their children in the separate religious schools permitted under the Constitution.

It is not difficult to understand why the Indian Constituent Assembly voted in favour of secularism in education. We have in this country people professing different faiths. A multi-religious State must pay equal regard to Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism or Judaism. Educational institutions cannot hope to provide adequate instruction in all these religions. To assign such a task to them would be to ask for the impossible. Besides, an organised and institutionalised religion sometimes claims exclusive possession of the truth and there is a risk that the peaceful atmosphere of an educational institution may be disturbed if these controversies with regard to the truthful character of any particular religion and the erroneous character of the others are brought into juxtaposition within the school.

India is therefore, and rightly, a secular State. This does not however mean that she is indifferent to moral values. Such a suggestion would be against the age old traditions of the country and the deeply religious nature of her people. A secular State does not require that all our activities shall be "profane" or that we shall cultivate no devotion to moral and spiritual ideals. On the contrary, the emphasis on the secular nature of the State demands a recognition of the spiritual values which are common to all faiths. Though the Constitution has not specified any one religion as *the* State religion, it has been inspired by a regard for all religions which is in consonance with the moral and religious strain that has run throughout our history. Whatever may be the position elsewhere, in India it has never been doubted that religion in the widest sense must inspire all education. The traditional systems of education have acted on the principle that a curriculum devoid of all ethical basis will prove barren in the end. In fact one of the main criticisms against the western system of education introduced in the last hundred and fifty years or so is that it is largely indifferent to religious values.

We may look at the question in another way. Religion is a part of life and it is but natural that children will ask questions about it. A.

child may be moved by the majesty of Nature, or it may have seen something at home or outside which baffles it. Surely, no teacher should refuse to consider questions a child may ask. It is a distortion of the Constitution to suggest that the teacher should not deal with such questions simply, naturally and with proper regard for the religious susceptibility of the child. Respect for the feelings of the child will require the teacher to assume, if not feel, an attitude of reverence for different faiths and customs, and the emphasis on secularism is merely an expression of this need.

For the reasons given above no direct religious instruction can be provided in schools. The responsibility for developing moral and spiritual values in students thus acquires a special significance and should be properly understood. We may differ over religious creeds but we have to agree on the basic moral and spiritual values of man. Further, history has led to the evolution of a common standard of morality for all mankind. Customs and conventions vary, beliefs and habits change, but certain basic values of life—like regard for truth and beauty, fellow-feeling for all human beings and consideration for the weak and the unhappy—are common to all religions and cultures. Without these, no human society can survive.

The need for common moral principles has become even more imperative in the modern world. All societies exhibit an increasingly complex social structure where the welfare of each depends increasingly upon the cooperation of all. Further, different societies have been brought together in a way unknown to previous ages. No social invention however ingenious, no enactment of statutes and ordinances, however edifying, can produce a good and secure society in an age of reduced distances and accelerated national and international contacts if personal integrity, honesty and self-discipline are lacking.

In educational terms, this means that the development of moral and spiritual values is basic to all other educational objectives. Instruction uninspired by moral and religious values will be inadequate as a preparation for democratic citizenship. These moral and spiritual values have been sought to be codified again and again. Every attempt to do so is a prelude to a fresh attempt. If society were static, reformulation would perhaps be unnecessary. The dynamic and changing nature of life demands that these values be examined and revalued from time to time. A recent list catalogues the following values as among the most important for the modern world : respect for human personality, faith in moral responsibility, respect for common consent, devotion to truth, respect for excellence, moral equality, pursuit of the general welfare and spiritual enrichment. Such a list can of course never be exhaustive, and in fact different persons will prepare different lists, but we may still use the present one as an illustration of what is intended.

Because societies change, values must be continually assessed and revalued. This does not mean that values necessarily change but that every effort must be made to see that the expressions of the basic values are consistent with the new demands of a new age. Some values have stood the test of time and become an intrinsic part of man's spiritual heritage. Others regarded as a value at one time have in course of time been proved to be only a custom or convention which can be discarded without injury to faith. Such an effort to define values is itself an exercise in moral endeavour and must be undertaken jointly by pupils and teachers.

At the beginning of the session, the staff of a school or college may every year hold a meeting and prepare a statement of values that should guide the work of the institution for the year. The statement must of course be reviewed from time to time. Once certain values have been accepted, the institution should bend all its energies to achieve the ideal in whatever is said or done within its four walls. This is implied in one of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission that the headmaster and staff should plan their work in such a way that the qualities of character and mind that they wish to inculcate are reflected in everything that is done in the school. The compositions pupils write, the speeches they make in the debating society, the pictures they paint, the maps they draw, the social activities they organise, the craft work they undertake should all be directed towards the achievement of these basic values.

It is hardly necessary to add that any statement of values prepared by the school should recognise that values are inter-related. Separate identification of values is valid only for the purpose of analysis. Again, the same school experience may, in fact, be relevant to the development of more than one value. There will also be cases where different values appear to be inconsistent with one another. This is of course where the real difficulty lies. There is no difference of opinion so long as a value is stated abstractly. Doubts arise when we seek to realise that value in a specific instance and even more when there is a seeming clash between different values. In life, we rarely have the experience of a pure case. Each event has many facets and makes a claim on different aspects of our nature. The attempt to formulate our system of values, and perhaps arrange them in an order of priority is of special advantage in such a situation. It may provide a frame of reference which will enable the school authorities to give necessary guidance to the pupils so that the conflict can be resolved on the basis of accepted principles.

The central problem of moral instruction is that it is more a matter of practice than theory. It is not communicated by intellectual means alone but transmitted from one person to another by living human contacts. From this it follows that moral education cannot be the exclusive responsibility of the school or the college. The home, the community and in the modern world, media of mass-communication such as the press, the radio and the motion picture have an equal responsibility in shaping the character and personality of the youth. Recent studies have shown how important the pre-school years can be. During this period children are almost completely under the direction of the home. Research has also established the power and influence of the modern media of mass-communication. Undesirable films, vulgar advertisements and sensational journalism can and do permanently damage the character of adolescents.

The importance of the school need not be minimised but we must remember that a child who attends school spends hardly a fourth of his waking life in school. The importance of the forces constantly impinging upon the character of the child outside the school must not in any way be underestimated. The development of character in the young is a joint responsibility of all social institutions and it is essential that they work together, even though the greatest responsibility may rest with the parents and the teachers.

I would however add that the school will still have a pre-eminent importance. The school deals with the most impressionable period of life.

It serves a larger proportion of the total population than perhaps any other social agency. It is also the chief agency set up exclusively for educational purposes. Further, its importance is in some ways out of all proportion to the time spent in school. Every parent knows the implicit faith of a child in the school teacher. The child accepts the teaching of school with complete self-surrender that is in strange contrast with its questioning attitude to the rest of society. The school must therefore take very direct responsibility for moral and spiritual education. Apart from its direct responsibility the school can be legitimately expected to secure the cooperation of the other agencies in developing a sense of values among the young.

In my next letter I shall try to offer some specific suggestions for the moral and spiritual development of pupils in schools and colleges.

With greetings,

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

All Education Ministers of States.

Copies to (a) State Education Secretaries.

(b) Directors of Education.

NEW DELHI,
16th December, 1955.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

I am sorry I could not follow up my last letter to you as quickly as I could have wished. I had then said that I would make a few suggestions as to how educational institutions can directly contribute to the development of a moral sense among the pupils. I need hardly say that the moral and spiritual needs of the young, or indeed of anyone, cannot be met by merely a series of lessons or even by a special course organised for the purpose. Knowledge about right conduct is certainly desirable and necessary, but unfortunately such knowledge does not by itself always lead to right conduct. In fact it has even been doubted if it increases materially the predisposition to right conduct. We have all come across cases of learned men who in spite of their knowledge of the right act wrongly. The whole science—if science it can be called—of casuistry is evidence of the difference between right knowledge and right conduct.

It may appear a truism but the fact is that as in other spheres, here also example is better than precept. In fact one might say that in the field of moral feeling and action, example alone matters. Values develop naturally out of the total experience of a pupil. If the school is to be a force for morality, its impact must arise out of all phases of the life of the school. It is thus far more important to organise the activities of the school in a way which will keep moral values continually before the pupils than to set apart separate hours for formal teaching of morality. We all know people who—even though they never talk to us of morality—teach us all the time through their life and conduct. Similarly, the best schools are those where the teachers by their example create an atmosphere of regard and consideration for others and a sense of loyalty to the basic values of life.

It is specially necessary to stress this point in our country. India is pledged to be a secular democratic State and as such, formal teaching of any particular religious dogma would be out of place in our schools. Since moral courses are usually associated in the public mind with the teaching of a particular religion, teachers generally like to avoid any formal instruction in any particular code of ethics. Critics of our schools often get hold of this fact and say that since the school programme provides no special hours for instruction in ethics or moral teaching, the schools are doing nothing or next to nothing in the moral training of the pupils. From this it is an easy step to say that the schools are doing nothing in character building of the younger generations.

Every school teacher worth his salt repudiates, and ought to repudiate, such criticism. He holds, and should hold that though no hours may be set apart for formal instruction in ethics, the school if it is a real school, inculcates moral values in the young through all its activities. In Dewey's picturesque phrase, "The schools teach them every moment of

the day, and five days in the week". If the teachers fail to instil in the pupils a sense of moral values, it is not because special periods are not set apart for what after all can be only knowledge about morals, but because their own character or the school atmosphere and ideals or their methods of teaching or the subject matter which they teach are not such as to bring intellectual recognition into vital union with character.

One may here point to a very common confusion between moral teaching and teaching of morality. Just as teaching of hygiene does not necessarily make a man healthy nor knowledge of monetary theory make him rich, knowledge of moral ideas does not necessarily make a man moral. Morality is essentially an attitude of the mind in which values are placed above self-interest. This attitude can be developed only through contact with men who have made it part of their being. This makes it clear that the greatest duty of a teacher—no matter what his special subject may be—lies in the sphere of moral and spiritual education of his pupils. I have said earlier that teacher may at times try to play for safety by avoiding references to moral and spiritual values because of the danger of arousing religious differences. The truth of the matter however is that the fundamental principles of ethics have a universality which cuts across all religious differences and can be taught without referring to the dogma of any creed.

Some people say that moral and spiritual values may be neglected by a teacher because of his complete absorption in his subject. I do not think this is ever likely to happen. Where the teacher is fully devoted to his studies, he may employ all his available time and conscious effort in mastering the subjects of the school curriculum, but in doing so, he will be indirectly developing in the pupils the moral and spiritual values of devotion to truth for its own sake. It cannot be too often said that it is not what the teacher says or tries to teach but the way in which he lives his life that will have the greatest impact on the young who come into contact with him. Conflicts arise because the teachers are slack and often allow worldly considerations to take precedence over their duty to their pupils.

Even at the risk of repetition one has to insist that the living example of the teacher is the most important factor in developing a sense of values among his pupils. The teacher must never forget that the keen eyes of his pupils are constantly watching him. He may think that he examines them at regular intervals, but the fact is that they are examining him every hour and every day throughout the year. The standards he sets, the actions he approves, the manner in which he handles his subject, his personal relations with his pupils, the way he behaves in the classroom and outside are all being watched constantly and one may add almost mercilessly. Older men know that no human being is perfect and hence it would be unfair to demand perfection of the teacher. Children are however much more exacting in their demands and are much more likely to condemn whatever they regard as a failing in their teacher. This among other factors demands that we must create conditions in which a fair proportion of the best and the ablest in each generation is attracted to the teaching profession. If this is not done, there is the certainty that in each generation the standards of scholarship and character will steadily go down till the community is faced with grave moral and intellectual crises.

In the special predicament in which the teacher finds himself, it is not only safe but perhaps necessary for the teacher to acknowledge his fault frankly whenever a lapse occurs. Such acknowledgement would itself be an education for the pupils. It would give them a feeling of kinship with the teacher and make them realise that like them he also has his limitations. It would teach them that if the teacher goes on trying to do the right in spite of occasional lapses, they also should do the same. There is however a crucial limit below which the teacher cannot go. If his lapses are too many or his character as such fails to arouse and retain the respect of his pupils, his attempts at establishing a comradeship with his pupils will only provoke their ridicule. All this only serves to emphasise what has in a sense been the burden of all these letters: the ultimate success of any programme of education, whether in the field of theoretical learning or in the development of moral and spiritual values, must ultimately depend on the personality of the teacher.

A sense of moral values is best developed during the impressionable years of adolescence. This is the time when there is a tremendous expansion of energy and feelings in the young. The onset of puberty brings about changes in body and mind which seek for release in identification in something greater than the individual self. If this expansion of physical, mental and emotional energy is not properly utilised by harnessing them to a set of ideals, there is a danger that adolescents may go astray. This is also a period when the young are in special need of care and affection. They begin to feel themselves as individuals and sometimes form exaggerated ideas of their own importance. If neglected or ignored, they suffer from moods of depression and at times even rush to the conclusion that nobody cares for them. Adolescence is thus a period of emotional and mental instability which may express itself in many different forms from minor maladjustments in personality to grave disequilibria in society.

I know that I am making great demands on our teachers. This to my mind is inescapable, for the next generation will largely be what the teachers are today. It will also undoubtedly require some reorientation in our ideas of both their recruitment and training. To be successful a school teacher must be able, but even more important is his attitude towards the profession of teaching. He must have a regard for the personality of the pupils placed in his charge and must thus be a person endowed with intellect, imagination and most important of all sympathy with the young. His training must place as great an emphasis on the development of the emotional side of his nature as in increasing his technical efficiency in the profession. The teacher training institutions must therefore provide opportunities for the teaching of values both through their curricula and their general atmosphere. Character along with scholarship and teaching skill must be considered in the selection of candidates for training and must be an overriding consideration when teachers are appointed. Both during the period of their training and thereafter, opportunities must be given for developing in the teachers the habit of cooperative action and learning consideration for others through extra-curricular activities as well as in-service workshops and other developmental programmes.

In the development of moral and spiritual values, the spirit in which the school is run is second only to the personal influence of the teacher. The two are not of course different and still less opposed to one another.

The spirit of the school will depend upon the character and personality of the teacher and vice versa. Their cumulative effect will be best felt in a school where the headmaster and the teachers work in a spirit of equality and comradeship. A school which relies too much on the centralised authority of the headmaster may develop undesirable traits that will retard the flowering of the children's personality. In all authoritarian systems, there is a risk that the members may degenerate into bullies who cringe before a superior authority but find compensation in extorting obedience from those placed below them. We must be specially careful that even the suspicion of such a development may not arise in the case of our schools.

Again schools which over-emphasise rivalry or competition as the mainspring of effort may give a wrong orientation to conduct of both teachers and pupils. The anxiety to succeed may lead to deviations—at first small but increasingly serious—from the strictest standards of honesty and fair play in their day-to-day work. Such a development will first be dull and then undermine the moral sense of the teachers and the pupils. A school charged with intolerance, fear, suspicion and selfishness will corrode the minds of teachers and pupils alike. It is only institutions where the teachers are sensitive and responsive to moral considerations and where a deep respect for the personality of the child pervades the atmosphere that will afford opportunities to the young to develop in a normal and healthy manner. In such a school, boys and girls will have to cooperate with one another and with their teachers in the completion of their assignments. They will help to formulate the plans and execute them and thus experience success and failure in work of their own choice. Tagore and Gandhi are perhaps the two greatest educationists of India in the last hundred years. They differed on many other points but they were completely at one in their view that within the school, there must be perfect self-government for the pupils. They knew from their experience and insight that then alone can pupils have a proper chance of moral and spiritual self-fulfilment.

In my next letter, which will be the last in the series, I propose to develop this point in somewhat greater detail.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.

CAMP, CALCUTTA,
13th February, 1956.

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In my last letter I had said that I would offer some more comments on the need of self-government within the school. I may put the same thing in another way and say that since morality is based on the recognition of individual responsibility, there can be no development of the moral sense unless the individuals have frequent and adequate opportunities to exercise initiative and choice. A school can develop the moral sense of its pupils only if the pupils have the chance to take decisions on their own and face the consequences. Since they will in any case have to take such decisions when they grow up, it is far better that they learn to bear responsibility within the comparative security of the school.

Submission and obedience are certainly of value in human affairs but if they are exalted at the cost of other values, as for example in the case of a certain type of military discipline, the results are harmful to society. Habits of obedience may be inculcated by repeated exercises or series of lessons, but mere habitual discipline does not suffice even within the military sphere. Successful generals have been those who have combined submission and obedience with initiative and daring when the occasion demands. One of the lessons in all clashes between dictatorships and democracies throughout history has been that while the initial advantage has been with the dictatorship the ultimate victory has almost invariably gone to the democracies. We must therefore ensure that from childhood onward, the young pupil is taught to regard himself as increasingly a free and responsible member of the community who is answerable to his own conscience for all his actions.

Just as it is easier to organise special lessons or courses in morality than to ensure that the entire atmosphere of the school is permeated by a moral tone, it is easier to mark out a few special activities where the pupils are given a measure of freedom than to transform the school into a democratic community. Nevertheless even the demarcation of a few such spheres is of great value in developing a democratic spirit in the school. Exercise of freedom and initiative in a few chosen activities develops the character and personality of the pupils and increases mutual confidence among teachers and the taught. As the pupils gradually learn that rights carry with them corresponding obligations, they begin to appreciate the reasons which influence their teachers and guardians in their actions. Conversely, as the teachers and the guardians see that pupils placed in positions of authority gradually develop feelings of respect and consideration for others, they tend to trust the pupils and offer them increasing responsibility. Like freedom, democracy also broadens from precedent to precedent, and there can be no better beginning of democracy than in a school community.

The greatest emphasis must therefore be placed on the creation of a proper moral and spiritual atmosphere in the school. There is however

a risk that in the name of such an atmosphere, nothing positive may be done for the teaching of moral values. What I have said above about democracy should be the corrective to such a risk. The spirit of democracy grows by the exercise of democracy. The school can develop a moral tone only if the specific activities and programmes are guided by spiritual and moral values and directed towards their assimilation in the daily life of the pupils. It is thus obvious that an indifferent or opportunistic attitude to moral values cannot create the necessary spiritual atmosphere in a school. There should be neither a merely literal instruction of certain dogmas nor should there be any reluctance to refer to moral values.

The only way to teach moral and spiritual values is to weave them into the entire life of the school. Where a society is simple and the pattern of life follows one uniform course, it is comparatively easier to suggest methods for teaching the values needed by such a society. In the modern world, the close contacts between different types of ideals and social standards has made the task of inculcating a set of democratic values one of both greater urgency and greater difficulty. The modern world demands complex and intricate loyalties from its citizens. Its sense of values has to accommodate the conflicting claims of different ideologies and different social needs. Young men and women in such a world have both greater opportunities and greater obligations. Simultaneously, many of the institutions which formerly catered to the proper growth of the individual have either decayed or become less effective. Religious institutions no longer command the devotion which they did in past ages. Even the family ties have loosened greatly. To day the individual often makes claims for himself which were inconceivable even a hundred years ago. In this fast changing and contracting world, the schools are being called to take upon themselves many functions which formerly belonged to the Church, the family or the State. The youth of a modern democracy are therefore increasingly what the schools make them. The responsibility of the schools has thus increased in direct proportion to the growth of democracy in different parts of the world.

Greater emphasis on the personal example of the teacher should not however be interpreted to mean that we should not learn from the accumulated experience of the past. Examples are certainly valuable but after all the resources in a school are comparatively limited. The accumulated experience of generations is on the other hand a limitless reservoir from which we can draw the most valuable lessons for morality.

We must however remember that all generalisations from past experience should be related to the experience of the learner himself. Neither direct instruction nor individual experience is by itself fully effective. Their judicious combination can alone offer an intelligent teacher the means to develop in his pupils a proper sense of values. This necessarily demands that the teacher himself must have a clear idea of what these values are. If he has a firm grasp on them, he can provide his pupils with opportunities of expressing in action and experience what they have learnt through precept or example. In such a context, discussions on morality among pupils and the formulation of principles under the guidance of the teachers can help in making intellectual recognition of values an essential ingredient in their personal life.

In my last letter, I had suggested that it may be desirable to select certain moral and spiritual values for special emphasis at certain periods of the pupil's life and use them as guiding principles for learning and other activities at school. I had also suggested that these values may be clearly stated and regularly reviewed by the headmasters and other teachers at stipulated intervals. Such reviews should take into consideration both the normal activities of the school as well as any breach of discipline or other lapse on the part of one or more students. In fact, such lapses may provide opportunities to the staff to discuss the matter among themselves, diagnose the causes and suggest proper remedies. The primary role in all these, at least at the school stage, must be played by teachers but it may be of very great educative value to associate pupils in such discussions to the extent to which their general level of maturity and understanding permits.

I have earlier hinted at the way in which regular studies in the classroom can contribute to the development of moral values among pupils. Quite naturally, such organised studies must absorb the largest part of the teacher's attention and time. If moral and spiritual values are to be taught through the total school experience, it is a primary responsibility of the teacher to use regular subjects of the curriculum to promote an appreciation of values and develop the character. Every subject provides the teacher, according to his ingenuity and wisdom, with a rich field for moral and spiritual exploration. Mathematics and science are often supposed to be a-moral, but the disregard of all personal interests and the devotion to exactitude, truth and objectivity which inspire these studies are of the greatest spiritual import. Popular thought associates two subjects in particular with moral and spiritual implications and a wise school will use them to the fullest extent. These are literature and social studies. They deal with human beings and their feelings and values, hopes and aspirations, motives and relationship. They thus provide abundant opportunities for inculcating in the young not only a feeling for the interests and skills that are being taught but also for the basic ideals which have moved mankind through the ages. In fact, in teaching literature and social studies, the teachers are all the time passing moral judgments. It is perhaps better that they should do so consciously rather than unconsciously.

Situations in literature and history demand solutions to problems, interpretations of motives, weighing of consequences, making of comparisons and finally judgments on character and events. These opportunities should be used as extensively as possible in developing moral curiosity among pupils and teaching them the supremacy of the right and the good over narrower considerations. There is unfortunately at times a tendency for teachers to be concerned merely with the facts and thus confine their questions to "who", "what" and "when" of their subject matter. Such an approach may give information but deprives pupils of legitimate opportunities of personal and social growth. A wise teacher will therefore devote his attention and interest also to questions which concern the "how", the "why", and the "wherefore" of events and situations in history and literature.

Asking of such questions of value will have another most salutary effect on the whole atmosphere of the school. There is too often a dichotomy between the content of textbooks and the content of out-of-school

life. This is one reason why pupils do not necessarily become healthy through the teaching of hygiene nor moral through that of morals. Every effort should therefore be made to correlate the subject matter of school studies with the life of students outside the school. This will not only make the instruction more concrete and real but help in the development of moral and spiritual values among the pupils. A wide-awake teacher will try to bridge the gap between theory and practice by borrowing illustrations from the experience of pupils outside the school and by relating them to matters taught inside the classroom. If history and literature are taught as concrete instances of human conduct in which real men and women have faced real situations of moral difficulty, the subject matter will become real and interesting to the pupils and simultaneously develop in them a keener perception of the abiding values of life.

In all that I have said above, I have proceeded on the assumption that moral instruction is most effective when it is taught through example or conveyed indirectly. There may however be occasions, and this applies to both very young children as well as adolescents, when direct instruction may be not only profitable but necessary. If a class has not learnt courtesy either through the example of the teacher or through the normal methods of indirect instruction, direct teaching through definite codes of conduct or modes of behaviour may have to be utilised. Similarly, if there is a serious lapse on the part of a student or a class, it may and perhaps must provide an opportunity for direct moral instruction. While it is true that the essence of morality is a certain spirit and attitude, one must also concede that at least a minimum standard of behaviour has to be enforced if society is to function satisfactorily. Virtue is a positive quality which cannot be commanded, but at least the absence of vice may within limits be enforced through regulations and outward restrictions.

In one of my earlier letters I cited the example of certain schools and colleges which have an Assembly of all teachers and pupils every day. I believe that such Assembly at the commencement of the daily work is useful not only for developing a sense of comradeship and fellow-feeling among members of the institution but may also help in the moral and spiritual development of the children if a general non-denominational prayer is offered at each session. It will help to develop in the children a feeling of respect for all religions if select readings from the scriptures of different faiths are read on such occasions. Similar readings from the great literature of different countries will foster respect for different nationalities and induce in them a spirit of toleration by impressing on them the basic unity of human character and ideals in spite of the many outward differences which characterise different peoples. Even at the University level, such Assembly with a universal prayer or a brief period of silent meditation may well help to develop the sense of individual and social integrity of its members.

Apart from the study of literature and the social sciences, schools should also organise talks and addresses by suitable persons on the lives of great personalities of history. In such talks, special emphasis may be placed on two values viz, consideration for others and fellow-feeling for all human beings. Familiarity with the lives of great men will develop in the children a spirit of charity, compassion and understanding and both directly and indirectly strengthen their character.

The selection of suitable books is of the greatest importance in the life of a pupil. They must be characterised by the broad human qualities to which reference has already been made. Even books on arithmetic or algebra can, in their examples or problems, contain elements which may create or confirm prejudices in the mind of children. The need for scrupulous care in the selection of books for literary studies is even more urgent. Such books of literature must from the nature of the case be graded in the earlier stages. Books prescribed should not in my view teach morality directly but bring before the children stories of the lives of great religious reformers like the Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus and Mohammad. There should also be stories from the lives of great sons and reformers in India and elsewhere. Many of the simple poems of Kabir or Nanak or the sayings of Gandhi or Tagore could easily form texts which the children may be asked to commit to memory. In higher classes of the school, there should be a more intimate study of the lives of men and women of faith and devotion. There is at present too often a tendency to concentrate on the lives of military heroes alone. This has not only a narrowing influence on the mind of the child but very often develops in him a wrong sense of values. Some of the great fighters for freedom on the battlefield should certainly be honoured but this ought to be for their services to the cause of human liberty. Much more attention should however be paid to the lives and teachings of literary men, social reformers, philosophers and scientists than has been done till now. Simultaneously, it should be brought vividly before the young learners that the contribution to human happiness of these lovers of peace is more far-reaching and permanent.

Students at the University stage should, as a part of their compulsory general studies become familiar with selections of a universalist character from the great scriptures of the world. In addition, they should study some of the great writings of all ages and all peoples for their literary value as well as their insight into human character and their spirit of compassion, and sympathy for man's efforts to raise the standard of life. For those who are specially interested in such problems, it would be desirable to institute courses in the study of comparative religions and religious philosophy. Everyone who goes through a university should in any case have some acquaintance with the basic teachings of the great religions and appreciate the fundamental unity of the human spirit in its aspiration for truth. It may be a superstition to think that by merely teaching the dogmas of religions adolescents can be made pious and moral, but there can be no denying that their hearts are uplifted and their vision ennobled by living contact with the essence of religion which is to live for God, for humanity, for one's country, for one's neighbours and for oneself only in the context of these wider loyalties.

Before I conclude, I would only like to add that I have purposely refrained from saying anything in this series of letters as to what the State and the community can and ought to do in improving the general atmosphere in schools. The school is an integral part of society. It is thus quite obvious that no permanent and far-reaching improvement within the school is possible without a corresponding improvement in society in general. The school is influenced by and in its turn influences society. I have purposely confined my remarks to the various ways in which the school can

start a process of regeneration which will in course of time affect the community at large. The success of such an endeavour, I need hardly say, will demand full cooperation from parents and guardians and in fact from all who are interested in the welfare of the future citizens of the country.

Yours sincerely,
Humayun Kabir.